

*Antonio Maria GENTILI*  
***THE BARNABITES***



**Manual of history and spirituality  
of the Order of Clerics Regular  
of St. Paul Beheaded**

# CHAPTER 8

## FROM THE DEATH OF THE FOUNDER TO THE CONSTITUTIONS (1539 - 1579)

We can now outline the first chapter of the history of the Order. It consists of about forty years full of events; a period very decisive for the Congregation as it was identifying its own physiognomy. But let us go back a moment. We know that (there are five *Breves* and *Bulls*):

1. on **February 18, 1533, Clement VII**, with the Breve "*Vota per quae vos in humilitatis spiritu,*" had approved the Order.
2. This was followed by the Bull "*Dudum felicitis*" by **Paul III, of July 24, 1535**, sent to Zaccaria and Ferrari, which granted, for five years, as a direct answer to the many calumnies which had traumatized the first group of Barnabites, the five years exemption from the Ordinary, confirmed the name as Clerics Regular, and granted the permission to dedicate to the Apostle Paul the first church of the Order, and also granted all the privileges of the Lateran Canons.

This second approval allowed the Zaccarian families to lunch themselves into the reform of morals. But the death of the Founder tragically interrupted the slow process of growth and internal settling, with incalculable repercussions for the Congregation. We will divide these forty years in three periods.

### I. 1539-1550 - A Love Affair

The title wants to emphasize the joy which marked the life of our confreres in the midst of persecutions.

#### *a) Fr. Morigia*

Before the death of the Founder, Fr. Morigia had assumed the government of the Order. Under his leadership, reelected more than once, the Barnabite family assumed more precise features.

As procurator general of Zaccaria, Morigia was receiving the subsidies the Countess of Guastalla was giving to the Fathers of St. Paul, who, once professed were not allowed to have any possession or regular income: they had to rely solely and completely on Divine Providence.

He was worried about the "five years" exemption from the local Ordinary: what will happen in the future if they should fall again under the Ordinary jurisdiction, and the Bishop would not be favorable to the Fathers?

Up to then, the Fathers had made only a private profession, and they were all busy in charitable work in Milan or in the mission in Vicenza. They were lacking a solid regular life to give stability and vigor inside and outside. Fr. Morigia took the challenge head on, and with great wisdom and determination guided the Congregation on the footstep established by

Zaccaria, enticing all to greater religious perfection. The many who asked to join the Community proved his wisdom and holiness: from 1539 to 1542 he gave the habit to many, like Paul Omodei, James Berna, John Paul Sacco, and John Peter Besozzi.

Meantime the mission in Vicenza, under the leadership of Fr. Ferrari, kept flourishing among the praises of all including the Holy Father Paul III, and many were the new vocations: like Frs. D'Aviano, Marta, Melso, Tito degli Alessi, etc.

### **b) Fr. Ferrari**

On November 29, 1542, Fr. Bartolomeo Ferrari was elected Superior General. His first official act was the inauguration of a public chapel dedicated to St. Paul Decapitated, next to St. Ambrose.

After a solemn procession, the Fathers exposed the Blessed Sacrament and for two days, morning and evening, preached to the people, and started the custom of the recitation of the Divine Office. It was on this occasion that they started to make use of the pontifical privilege to wear, as a sign of poverty, the rochet instead of the surplice. They also started at this time to toll the bells at 3:00 p.m. every Friday, in memory of the death of Our Lord.

One of the greatest concerns of Fr. Ferrari was the situation of the novices. He wanted to make sure they had the *right intention*, therefore he made them undergo extensive testing, and entrusted their education to no one else but Fr. Morigia.

To have more solid juridical foundations, in 1543 a petition was made to the Holy See, and so

**3. on November 23, 1543, Paul III**, with the Bull "*Pastoralis Officii*" made the exemption permanent, and granted the faculty to possess goods in common.

On July 14, 1543, they also obtained an Imperial decree from Charles V, recognizing the Congregation as a juridical entity in the Empire, exempt from any tax.

Free to extend themselves beyond Milan, the Barnabites brought their reform to Verona, Venice and Ferrara, besides Vicenza. The tremendous success of the three Institutes (Barnabites, Angelics, and the Married) increased their esteem, creating many vocations, mostly from well-to-do families.

Having taken care of the juridical rights of the Congregation in the Church and in the State, the same year the Fathers started to profess the Solemn profession, starting with Fr. Melso on December 24, 1543.

On November 25, 1544, Fr. Ferrari died, creating quite a dilemma for Fr. Morigia: they should have elected a new Superior General, but the Community asked him to carrying on the task until June of the following year. When the Chapter was convoked, Fr. Morigia found himself elected again to the post, and to no avail he tried to change the mind of the Fathers.

His first concern was to conclude the deal for the purchase of St. Barnabas: Alexander Taeggi was very much in favor of the deal, so through his intervention, Paul III, on August 21, 1545, published the Bull approving the deal. On October 21, the Fathers officially took possession of St. Barnabas.

To be freer, he asked Fr. Melso to take care of the Angelics. In his last two years Fr. Morigia experienced the loss of Fr. Da Sesto and Fr. De Caseis, and during Lent of 1546 he himself felt very sick, until March 31, when he died.

### c) Fr. Besozzi

The following month, the General Chapter elected Fr. John Peter Besozzi as Superior General. The Chapter took place in St. Barnabas. Two days later, holding a cross, Fr. Besozzi led the Community in procession to the chapel of St. Paul Decapitated.

His first concern was to finish the remodeling of St. Barnabas, to be able to accommodate the expanding Community. It was in June 1547, that all the Fathers were able to move in the new house. The church was consecrated in November by Bishop Melchior Crivelli, and right away was open to the apostolate.

The other concern of Fr. Besozzi was the welfare of the various missions so flourishing by now in the Venetian territory. Accompanied by the Angelic Paola Antonia Negri he went on a visitation. Meantime many more requests were pouring in from various Bishops and civil authorities, because of the great esteem by now the Zaccarian family was enjoying.

Fr. Besozzi too followed on the footsteps of the co-founders emphasizing community life, strict observance, and great wisdom and discernment in the acceptance and training of novices. Another of his concerns were the Constitutions, and specifically if to implement some of the chapters of the Constitutions written by Fra Battista. He obtained from the Pope a Bull allowing that the Superior could be removed at any time or even to confirm him for life. Paul III agreed, but he died before he could issue the Bull, which was promulgated by his successor, Julius III.

4. To protect the goods of the Congregation, Fr. Besozzi obtained another **Bull** (*Rationi congrui*) from **Julius III**, on **February 22, 1550**, granting the election of judges who would protect the Congregation and its goods from any abuses-from outside without having to go to court. This Bull, called “conservative” since it was protecting the possessions of the Barnabites, concluded this first period.
5. **Julius III** on **August 11, 1550** issued another **Bull** (*Ad hoc nos Deus*) authorizing to accept new members and to profess the vows; it is the first document to use the title “Clerics Regular of St. Paul Decapitated).

## II. A Stormy Two Years: 1551-1552

The crisis of these two years had its origin in the changed balance caused among the first followers of Zaccaria by his own premature death, and the death of the two cofounders. Besides them we have to mention the Countess Torelli and the Angelic Paola Antonia Negri.

Anthony Mary, a good leader, had been able to control the apostolic ardors and sometime bizarre creativity of these two women. After his death a conflict between the two caused the Countess to withdraw from the Angelics, leaving Paola Antonia Negri in total control. She was called “divine Mother,” spiritual “guide” by the first Barnabites, finding in her the hair of the Founder’s teachings.

The supremacy she exercised even over the Barnabites, and some other strange attitudes, easily subject of misunderstanding, gave a pretext to the Venetian Republic (the Serenissima) for the expulsion of the Order.

On February 21, 1551 the “Council of the Ten” together with the “Zonta,” 18 votes in favor, 1 negative, and 7 abstentions, was imposing to the “foreign women” and on the “priests,” “priests and ministers” of the Congregation of St. Paul, to leave Venice in 6 days, and “all other cities, lands and places of our dominion,” in 15 days.

The decree specified how in the meantime the Paulines had to abstain from “their usual operations,” forbidding also that in the future the women and men of the Congregation would dare return in the Venetian dominion without license from the same Council.

By February 24 the order had reached the communities in Vicenza and Verona.

At first the Barnabites *“resolved to follow the order bowing their heads without any opposition. Rather, while some influential people wanted to intervene to check out and try to understand the reasons of this sudden decision, they all judged that these too human reasons and resolutions had to be stopped, and just follow God’s will. Thus, having taken care of the things of the moment, they returned (to Milan) with faithful readiness and trust in God: which pleased them all, as they wanted, as sons of Paul, to be able to stay on the right or left, with good or bad reputation.”*

This is what the Angelic Sfondrati wrote referring for sure to a community deliberation of our Confreres, opposing any attempt to ingratiate the Venetian government. On that occasion the Fathers held a *collatio* on how to gain profit from the persecution, and Fr. Soresina, in his candor, exclaimed: “Let us be happy! Christ Crucified has a great love for us, and wants our service, since for years already He has made us suffer, and in this way he wants to present us to the world through infamy, as already our Reverend Father Anthony M. Zaccaria has predicted.”

The Barnabites thought it was not useful to deal with the Doge, so they sent instead Fathers Besozzi and Melso to Rome to clarify the situation. But as soon as they reached Rome (January 1552), they were thrown into prison by the Inquisition.

What the Inquisitors wanted to hear from them was not a justification of their actions in Venice but rather a full reconstruction of the past 20 years of the religious experience of the “Guastallines,” that is, to verify all those suspicions that had been surfacing here and there at the Roman Curia, and that the bishop of Chieti (Caraffa, future Paul IV), now a powerful Cardinal of the Inquisition, had never ceased to harbor against Fra Battista, Torelli, and that singular Community Life, cut off from the hierarchy, which absolutely he could not approve.

As the two Fathers were making the deposition, the suspicion by the Inquisitors were getting worse as they faced the whole picture of charismatic experiences, singular penances, radical abstinences, sought out humiliations, grave personal ascetical practices, and intense community life totally unknown to the tradition of Religious Orders. Right away the Inquisitors understood that to clarify the source of the theology and spirituality of that new form of Religious Life they had to go deeper, and so they subjected the two to wearing interrogations and memory efforts. Matteo Daverio, Torelli’s lawyer and procurator, realized that the trail was going way behind the Venetian ban, reaching to the roots of the Pauline Institutes, and with a very severe process that did not allow any excuse or deviation.

Having verified that the Pope had great respect for the Cardinal Inquisitors, and that they were not satisfied with vague confessions or worst with recourse to extenuating circumstances, but were demanding from the two Barnabites a full identification of the



“errors” of the past, and their disapproval, Daverio tried to convince the Countess: “those gentlemen are not guided by reason but, at any cost, they want to be in the right.”

The attack was converging against them. Indeed the Serenissima, not satisfied with the ban, had tried to cause them more trouble divulging insinuations which gave ground for the Inquisition triple accusation:

- a) they followed the teachings, believed erroneous, of Fr. Battista Carioni;
- b) they were governed by A. P. Negri, who was called “divine Mother;”
- c) they were leading almost common life with the Angelics.

The persistent questions about the ascetical practices and the religious inspiration animating the young communities of the Barnabites and the Angelics, were combined with a crescendo of suspicions and various solicitations to have the Fathers confess about the part played by Fra Battista in the two foundations, and reveal the names of the most enthusiast adherents and the weight of the doctrinal influence by the deceased “spiritual father.”

In the meeting of February 11, 1552, one month after the arrival of the two Fathers, the Inquisitors had already reached the conclusion to prohibit Fra Battista’s works, especially the “Victory over oneself.”

On February 27, Fr. Besozzi was set free since he confessed what they wanted, that is, his perplexities about Fra Battista’s teachings, and his condemnation of A. P. Negri, the spiritual heir of that master! He was entrusted to St. Ignatius of Loyola, a friend of the Barnabites – as noted by Fr. Premoli – but also one who was able to have more information from the religious and eventually to report to the Inquisitors.

Fr. Melso was still in jail because of his continuous defense of Fra Battista, so they tried to have more information from him through delayed questioning and possible terrible penalties. He was released on March 11. The Pope received the two of them in a very cordial audience. They stayed with Basilio Ferrari.

On March 29 there was another session, always centered on Fra Battista. A commission was created to examine the writings. Members were also three Dominicans: Gerolamo Muzzarelli, Master of the Sacred Palace, Arcangelo Bianchi, Vicar of the Dominicans, and Michele Ghisleri, from the Holy Office, future Pope. The commission called in many theologians for the examination of the books, and on April 26 reached the decision and ordered the two Fathers and their Superiors to send to the Holy Office all the works, original and copies, of Fra Battista, together with Serafino da Fermo’s booklet (of which until now we have no news).

On May 12 the order was obeyed in details and, in 1559, all the works were burned at the Holy Office.

The Roman Inquisition was hitting very hard on Fra Battista’s writings, and at the sometime the religious experience of the Pauline Congregations, giving a radical turn to the future of the two regular Institutes to be soon sanctioned by the imminent apostolic visit by bishop Leonardo De Marini.

Fra Battista’s writings were included in the 1554 Index of Venice, in the 1559 of Rome, and then in the one of Trent in 1564, but with the clause: “quandiu non prodierint emendanda” but after Trent no one bothered to amend them!

## **The Apostolic Visit**

The sad event, source of so much apprehension for the young Institute, produced very healthy results. It was one of those very beneficial crises. In fact, the Pontiff gave them a Cardinal Protector in the person of Cardinal Alvarez of Toledo. He entrusted to Bishop Leonardo Marini the apostolic visit to both the Barnabites and the Angelics.

Bishop Marini reached Milan, and on November 17, 1552, presented in the General Chapter the Breve from Rome, with the following resolutions:

- a) the Monastery of the Angelics had to be totally separated from the one of the Barnabites; Fr. Marta, as Superior, was not anymore the Apostolic Visitor for them; only one Father would be available for them as Confessor;
- b) Paola Antonia Negri had no authority of any kind any more, was not to be called 'divine mother,' and was to be confined for three months at first, and then for life, in the Monastery of St. Clare, with the prohibition to communicate with anyone; the Angelic Paola Maria Bonatta, who had tried to escape from the monastery with Negri, was to be removed as Prioress;
- c) the Angelics had to adopt the cloister;
- d) they all had to repudiate the teachings of Fra Battista.

The immediate execution of these dispositions facilitated the job of the Visitor who concluded his mission at the end of November approving a first draft of regulations (the Constitutions of 1552), put together to give a juridical status to the Congregation and to its official acts, like the Profession of the vows.

Finally everything was behind their back, so Fr. Besozzi wrote to St. Ignatius: "My dear Father, I saw nothing but our souls, good and right decisions, great desire to honor God; although our naiveté and ignorance have caused some disorders."

Instead Fr. Marta - the intrepid Superior General of this thorny period - wrote to the Cardinal protector: "*Following the Canonical Visit we have been found to be Catholic and alive and obedient members of the Roman Church, as we have always considered ourselves; and at the present and for the future we are ready to shed our blood rather than to stain ourselves with such a stain*" (infidelity to the Church).

### **Consequences**

All these difficulties had to leave some marks of misunderstandings and divisions in the Congregation.

First of all a group of those who had entered the Congregation motivated by the influence of Negri, once she was banned in St. Clare, lost any interest in the Congregation, being faithful only to her, with great dedication and many intrigues they tried to rehabilitate her. Among the dozen who at the time of the Visitation had expressed the need for time to think it over before professing the vows left the Congregation we have to mention Fr. John Paul Folperti, and Fr. Mark Anthony Pagani. Others according, to the new Constitutions, were given a year for reflection.

The evil minded and slanderers could not accept the peaceful solution to the trials, so they continue the persecution through calumnies, especially in Venice. In Cremona and Ferrara the Fathers were accused of being rebels and heretics, and on the public streets they were insulted for being pelagians and followers of Fra Battista. Fr. Marta had to appeal to the Cardinal Protector, especially when the Bishop of Cremona started to act against our Fathers.

Another unpleasant consequence was the reaction of the Countess Torelli of Guastalla, who found very difficult to accept the decision by the Roman authorities, especially about the cloister.

In the midst of all these difficulties a ray of hope came to bring new vigor to the Community when Alexander Sauli asked for admission. Another pleasant happening was the activity of Fr. D'Aviano in Cremona for the establishment of a catechetical school.

### **III. Twenty-five years of adjustments (1554-1579)**

Probably the Barnabite Order has never had a period so full of thinking over and of work in search for rules and spiritual aims, as these 25 years.

The storm of 1551 had taught the first Barnabites that they could not survive unless

- they had precise regulations.
- an appropriate training of their candidates, so much needed after the exodus of Paola Antonia Negri and followers;
- they needed to leave Milan to expand their work of reform.
- They also needed to find a "style" in the formation of their novices,
- to discipline the presence of the Brothers together with the Clerics.

#### ***The Brothers***

Until 1542 only priests and candidates for the priesthood had been admitted to the Congregation. All the house-chores, therefore, were done by the priests, the clerics, or those still in lay state, making sure that these chores were not an impediment to the apostolic activities.

In 1542 for the first time a man presented himself and asked to be accepted only to carry on the humble menial works of the house. His name was Andrew Scaglioli. He and those who followed his example did not receive a special name or a habit.

It was the Chapter of 1554 to decide to give them a habit, since they were going to leave in the Monastery, and they were called "*converted*," they would profess the vows and so bound to observe the Constitutions, but they would not be allowed to take part in the Community meetings. The first to receive the habit was Innocent Cermenati, who had served in St. Barnabas for three years already.

#### ***Pavia***

The Chapter of April 16, 1556, elected Fr. Marta as Superior General, while Fr. Besozzi was elected as Major. The Congregation was experiencing a time of tranquility and peace, thanks to the guidance given by the Constitutions and the zeal of the Superiors. The membership was limited to the Community of St. Barnabas, and there seemed to be no pressure to expand.

The first move toward expansion came from Pavia, where, toward the end of 1556, the Fathers were offered the church of St. Mary's in Canepanova. It was judged a golden



opportunity especially for the education of the young members in the Congregation at the local University. On February 9, 1557, it was decided to send “*Fr. Besozzi as Superior, together with Mr. Alexander Sauli to give some sermons, and Paul M. Omodei to teach Christian life.*”

Because at that time only the Superior of St. Barnabas was considered as the head of the Congregation, in the missions the local Superior was considered only as a Vicar, therefore a constant communication had to take place between the missions and St. Barnabas for any kind of decision. From now on therefore, we have at our disposal plenty of documents to look at our history.

In Pavia Fr. Omodei developed a very efficient catechesis, while Fr. Sauli attracted the University students and by 1560 he had created a special club with them. That same year the Chapter entrusted to Fr. Sauli the care of the Barnabite students, which led to the development of the first house of studies of the Congregation.

### ***Fr. Melso***

In April of 1558, the Chapter elected Fr. Paul Melso as Superior General. He immediately received an invitation from Rome to take over the Confraternity of Pilgrims with the church of the Holy Trinity, but unfortunately the Chapter did not accept. He made an attempt to see if the Venetian ban could be removed, but he realized that the time was not ripe yet.

Fr. Melso was instrumental for opening a kind of minor seminary, first of the kind, for our Congregation, to educate young men, especially poor ones, who seemed to have a vocation to be clerics.

In the Chapter of April 6, 1559, Fr. Melso obtained extensive powers for the Vicars in the various missions so that they would not have to constantly refer to St. Barnabas for any decision. This allowed Pavia to go ahead with the necessary remodeling of the church and the house, under the leadership of Fr. Peter-Paul D'Alessandro.

At the end of July 1559, Fr. Melso, together with Fr. Battista Soresina went to Genoa for some business. Unfortunately he became victim of a high fever and on August 3, died in Genoa. Fr. Marta took over the government of the Congregation.

Meantime Cardinal Alvarez, protector of the Congregation, had died on May 31, 1557. It will be only on June 20, 1560, that a new protector was assigned to our Congregation in the person of Cardinal Serbelloni of St. George. He will be the last one, because when he died in 1591, the Barnabites had an intimate friend in St. Charles Borromeo.

### ***Internal development and St. Charles Borromeo***

On August 29, 1564, St. Charles inaugurated the Diocesan Synod with a solemn procession. Also the Barnabites participated, and indeed this was the first time that they appeared in public as an ecclesial body. The year after Fr. Sauli was asked to be part of the Provincial Council as an expert. He was called to Milan on September 23, and so the following day he participated with the other Barnabites in the solemn entrance of St. Charles in his Church of Milan. This participation caused a variation in the Barnabite habit. They used to wear a round biretta, which by now was not used anymore in Rome or even in Milan. So for the occasion they conformed to the common use adopting the square biretta.

During the Chapter of 1566, it was decided to elect one of the members to preside during the Chapter before the election of the new Superior General. The first to be elected to this position was Fr. Besozzi, who, at the end, on May 4, was then elected Superior General. Probably was on this occasion that St. Alexander met St. Charles for the first time, who tried to have him transferred from Pavia to Milan, but in vain.

The following year St. Alexander was elected president of the Chapter and eventually Superior General, and so he had to move to Milan. Under St. Alexander's leadership the Congregation renewed its original fervor, the number of members increased (19 new professions during the three years), and soon the foundations multiplied: Cremona, Casale, Monza, Rome, Vercelli.

It is of this time the attempt by St. Charles to convince the Barnabites to join with the Congregation of the Humiliates, a proposal adamantly opposed by St. Alexander. They were officially suppressed on February 7, 1570.

### ***Fr. Omodei and the new Constitutions***

In 1570, the General Chapter called upon Fr. Paul Omodei to be Superior General, succeeding St. Alexander, now Bishop of Aleria in Corsica.

The Congregation by now was increasing with many new recruits, so it became imperative to tackle the most arduous and demanding task: the Constitutions, because what they had used up to then was good enough only for a small community of one house. The study was entrusted to a commission composed by the Frs. Asinari, Bonfanti and D'Alessandro.

It was during this Chapter that it was decided to have the Superior General free from the responsibility of an individual community, electing a local Superior.

In August, Bishop Anthony Brandao, from Portugal, asked the Barnabites to open a house in Portugal, and he obtained all necessary papers and permits from Rome. But when the proposal was presented in the Chapter, it was not accepted for '*lack of qualified subjects.*' It was an unfortunate refusal! Fr. Premoli comments: "Probably the young members, together with Fr. Asinari, were in favor of the project. But the young abound with generosity more than prudence, while the old, like Fr. Besozzi, often, and most likely in this occasion, lack generosity, relying on a prudence which is too much human." And we must say that outside the Congregation the refusal was not well received!

Another concern of the Fathers was the novitiate. With the suppression of the Humiliates, St. Charles gave to the Barnabites at first the church of all Saints in Monza, but then the Fathers asked to move to a larger one, the church of St. Mary al Carrobiolo. The Barnabites moved in the new house on June 17, 1573, and immediately they thought to use it as the novitiate for the Congregation. When in 1579, the project became a reality St. Charles himself nominated Fr. Gabrio Porro as the Master.

Meantime the "Rules for Novices" had been compiled. The General Chapter of May 8, 1568, had entrusted the task to Frs. Alexander Sauli, Peter Michiel, and Paul Sacco, under the supervision of Fr. Omodei. The actual writer was Fr. Asinari.

### **First house in Rome**

In 1572, the aging Fr. Besozzi was elected Superior General for the forth time. First concern of the Chapter was to carry on the composition of the Constitutions, and so in 1573 Frs. Besozzi, Omodei, Sacchi, D'Aviano, Maletta, and D'Alessandro were selected for the task.

Fr. Besozzi was instrumental for moving the theologate from Pavia to St. Barnabas, providing the best teachers available, like Bernard Guenzio and Fr. Augustine Tornielli; and he also composed the "Rules for studies" which will be adopted by the Constitutions in 1579.

Another innovation by Fr. Besozzi was the official nomination of visitors, who would pay a visit to the various communities and make a report for the Superior General. This innovation too will be codified by the 1579 Constitutions.

On May 1, 1572, Pius V, a dear friend of the Barnabites, had died. The Fathers got worried because there was no special relationship with the new pope, Gregory XIII. This compelled them to find a way to open a house in Rome. Fr. Besozzi approached various Cardinals who could help in the effort.

In 1574, Fr. Paul Omodei, is the new Superior General. In October he sent Frs. Tito degli Alessi and Fr. Dominic Boerio to Rome. They visited the Cardinals Serbelloni, Moroni, Albani, and Msgr. Speciani who referred them to St. Philip Neri. They received most warm welcome by all, also by the Jesuits. Various churches were offered, but for one reason or the other, nothing was working out, so that the two Fathers were ready to return to Milan empty handed. Suddenly, Adrian Graziosi, pastor of St. Blaise all'Anello, at the beginning of 1575 offered to them his church. With a Bull of March 1, the Pope approved the deal, and the Fathers took possession on March 25.

On March 19, the two Fathers obtained an audience with the Pope so that they could express their gratitude.

In July the Fathers started a restructuring of the building, and in October they started their apostolate. Fr. Omodei provided also help sending right away Frs. Bernard Guenzio and Matthias Maino, and in September Fr. Maletta as Superior, together with the student Eugene Cattaneo. Fr. D'Alessi wrote: "So many people are coming to our church, both from the city and from outside, that if all the confessors from St. Barnabas were here, all of them would have work: they do not allow us time to rest... May the Lord be praised."

### **The new and final Constitutions**

In 1576 the new Superior General is Fr. Timothy Facciardi. To note that the title "Superior General" was not in used as yet, it will be codified by the New Constitutions. At this time the Vicars of the various houses receive the title as Superiors.

At this time the Congregation was composed by 45 Fathers, 15 professed students, and 21 Brothers. Unfortunately many of them will fall victims of their apostolic zeal during the upcoming pestilence which will devastate the city of Milan in 1577. That year the Chapter could not be held.

In 1578, Fr. Besozzi, 75 years old, and bed ridden, was again elected Superior General so that the project of the Constitutions would be carried out to its conclusion. Already in 1576 the first draft had been circulated among the members for objections and suggestions. In July 1578, St. Charles Borromeo was officially delegated to preside over the work of the Constitutions. The work was completed the following year.

On November 7, 1579, Gregory XIII issued the Breve “*Cum, sicut accepimus*” approving the new Constitutions.

### APPROVALS OF THE CONGREGATION

#### February 18, 1533

Clement VII’s Breve

“*Vota per quae*”

Approval of the Order

To the “Presbyters of Milan and Cremona”

Permission to dedicate first chapel to the Apostle Paul

#### August 25, 1535

Paul III’s Bull

“*Dudum felicitis recordationibus*”

Diocesan exemption for 5 years

Title “Clerics Regular of St. Paul”

#### November 23, 1543

Paul III’s Bull

“*Pstoralis Officii*”

Perpetual exemption

Possession of goods

in common

#### August 11, 1550

Julius III’s Bull

*conservative*

Protection of the Order’s

possessions

#### February 22, 1550

Julius III’s Bull

“*Rationi congrui*”

Authorized to accept new

Members & Profession of vows

1<sup>st</sup> Pontifical document to use “Clerics

Regular of St. Paul Decapitated”

#### November 7, 1579

Gregory XIII’s Breve

“*Cum sicut accepimus*”

Approval of the Constitutions